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AUTHOR	Zoreda, Margaret Lee; Revilla, Lic. Ma. Terese Flores
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ABSTRACT

This paper proposes the integration of Anglophone studies through a Deweyan perspective in the curriculum of English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) at the university level, underscoring the role that Anglophone post-colonial literature can have in stimulating intercultural reflection. It explains that in order to understand the "other" peoples of English-speaking cultures, the EFL curriculum must be based on meaningful contents that the students would experience personally and collaboratively, with the goal of achieving both an understanding of those cultures that speak English and a self-knowledge of themselves, their own culture, and the nation. The paper suggests that in a paradigm shift of placing EFL within the broader context of Anglophone studies, learners would have the opportunity to come into contact with a broad range of elements (Deweyan tools) to aid in the formation of the discerning mind of social intelligence, as they construct their own diverse, hybrid voice of reflexive resistance. (Contains 28 references.) (SM)

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Creating Intercultural Competence: A Proposal for Anglophone Studies in Restructuring University Curricula in English as a Foreign Language

Toward the goal of creating critical intercultural encounters, this paper proposes the integration of Anglophone studies through a Deweyan perspective in curricula of English as a Foreign Language at the university level. In particular, it underscores the role that Anglophone post-colonial literatures can have to stimulate intercultural reflection.

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Research Paper May 2003

"Creating Intercultural Competence: A Proposal for Anglophone Studies in Restructuring University Curricula in English as a Foreign Language"

Dr. Margaret Lee Zoreda and Lic. Ma. Teresa Flores Revilla
Research Area in Foreign Languages and Cultures
Dept. of Philosophy
Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Iztapalapa

Correspondence:
Apartado Postal 74-255
09081 Iztapalapa, DF
MEXICO

margaret@secsa.podernet.com.mx
mlmz@xanum.uam.mx

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Creating Intercultural Competence: A Proposal for Anglophone Studies in Restructuring University Curricula in English as a Foreign Language

Toward the goal of creating critical intercultural encounters, this paper proposes the integration of Anglophone studies through a Deweyan perspective in curricula of English as a Foreign Language at the university level. In particular, it underscores the role that Anglophone post-colonial literatures can have to stimulate intercultural reflection.

The English-speaking Cultures and the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

Based on the affirmations of Kramsch (1993) and Byram (1999, 1997, 1989), the current teaching of university EFL should overcome exclusively linguistic goals in order to include the intercultural study of the cultural communities formed by the peoples that speak English. The current drive toward not only linguistic but also cultural competence in foreign language study has also been expressed by national, regional, and international educational policy statements as the U.S. *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (1996), the European Community's *Modern Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. A Common European Framework of Reference* (1996), and the UNESCO's *Education in a Multilingual World: UNESCO Guidelines on Language and Education* (2003). Such documents promote the rationale that

> the cultural component of language teaching and learning should be strengthened in order to gain a deeper understanding of other cultures; languages should not be simple linguistic exercises, but opportunities to reflect on other ways of life, other literatures, other customs. (Principle III, *Education in a Multilingual World* 2003: 30)

More emphatically, the U.S. *Standards* proposes that the

> study of another language enables students to understand a different culture *on its own terms* (original italics). The exquisite connections between the culture that is lived and the language that is spoken can only be realized by those who possess a knowledge of both. American

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> students need to develop an awareness of other people's world views, of their unique way of life, and of the patterns of behavior which order their world, as well as learn about contributions of other cultures to the world at large and the solutions they offer to the common problems of humankind....Oliver Wendell Holmes [contended] that the human mind, once stretched to a new idea, never returns to its former dimensions... (*Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century* 1996: 43)

Although this last policy statement is directed toward the context of American students, it is also of utmost urgency for our students in Mexico and Latin America, given that in our increasingly multicultural, internationalized environments, mere tolerance will not suffice. We believe that now, more than ever, the educational philosophy and proposals of the great 20th century American public intellectual, John Dewey, are especially relevant in foreign language education.[1] Dewey incessantly studied the relations between educating future citizens and the creation and growth of real participatory democracy. One of the "dispositions", or habitual attitudes, most stressed by Dewey, is the formation of a socialized, discerning, mind, "social intelligence": "the power to understand [things] in terms of the use to which they are turned in joint or shared situations" (Dewey 1966: 33). For Dewey, within the virtue of socialized intelligence is included the disposition of "sympathy" for the "other" (Dewey 1966: 121). In order to develop such "intelligence", what is needed is *respect*, the result of knowledge and *understanding* of the other. Putman explains his perspective about this element in the Deweyan society:

> A pluralistic society... is not simply a society in which many different racial, ethnic, and religious groups can be found; it is not simply a society in which all these groups enjoy equal civil and political rights; rather, a pluralistic society is a society in which members of each group respect the cultures and values of the other groups. Respect, unlike mere tolerance,

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[1] For a more detailed analysis of the practice of EFL from a Deweyan standpoint, see Lee Zoreda 2001.

> requires some knowledge of the other culture; one cannot respect what one does not know at all. (Putnam 373: 373-4)

In order to understand the "other" peoples of English-speaking cultures, the EFL curriculum must be based on meaningful contents—not trivial—of reflection, which the students would experience personally and collaboratively, with the goal of achieving both an understanding of those cultures that speak English and a self-knowledge of themselves, their own culture, and nation (Dewey 1988a: 332). Let us remember that for Dewey, one of the most important functions of schooling is to provide encounters with diverse and significative *new* experiences:

> ...it is the office of the school environment... to see to it that each individual gets an opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group in which he was born, and to come into living contact with a broader environment. (Dewey 1966: 20)

Instead of only considering EFL as a pedagogy for the acquisition of linguistic abilities, intercultural competence of the English-speaking cultures would not be merely a means in understanding the English language, but rather an end in itself. The study of English-speaking peoples—Anglophone studies—ought to be viewed as the creation of a discipline. In reflexive learning experiences of Anglophone cultures, our students could participate actively in the important "conversations" and topics that concern (and have concerned) those English-speaking peoples, and, at the same time, in the same meaningful conversations of the students' own culture(s) while they discover their "[intercultural] knowledge-in-action" (Applebee 1996: 51-52; 117).

A Multidisciplinary Perspective: Anglophone Studies

From a Deweyan outlook, which advocates providing students with the means

to see connections in experience (Dewey 1966: 140), what could result more educative is the multidisciplinary reformulation of the English language within the curricular concept of area studies, in our case, Anglophone studies. Together with the study of the acquisition of English as a Foreign Language and its teaching-learning processes, we would find the study of the various domains of the "Inner Circle" (where English is the mother language) and the "Outer Circle" (those peoples who suffered colonialism by the "Inner Circle") (Kachru 1992a) from the point of view of sociology, anthropology, history, geography, politics, the arts (including film), popular cultures, etc. (Lee Zoreda 1998). With such multifaceted educational experiences, there would be the stimulation through diversity that would foster the continuous growth of students.

Of the subject-matters that could be included in Anglophone studies, Dewey would take very seriously the place of the history of the various English-speaking societies. He points out that historical knowledge is absolutely necessary in order to make astute ethical decisions; for him, history is

> an organ for analysis of the warp and woof of the present social fabric, of making known the forces which have woven the pattern. The use of history for cultivating a socialized intelligence constitutes its moral significance. (Dewey 1966: 217)

In a similar way, we can understand culture as the "continuous memory" of the Anglophone peoples and, as such, it is indispensable to refer to history in order to comprehend those societies and the underlying meanings of the English language (Townson 2000: 7; 11). The following are suggestions as to what ways different themes could be constructed about Anglophone peoples. From an inexhaustible number of topics, we could offer discussions about: the role of women in the United

Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand; immigration and illegal workers in England, Australia, the United States, and Canada, with the differing policies of each; the distinct kinds of governments and presidential/prime minister elections; human rights (United States, Keyna, and South Africa); censorship; identity and national cinema; the social reflection on the diverse literatures; and popular music in the history of the various Anglophone peoples. What is essential is that for every theme in Anglophone studies there should be a corresponding reflection on that theme on the part of the students from within their own culture(s). As an example especially pertinent for Mexico is the case of Canada and its relation with the "Colossus of the South", the United States.[2] Worried about the American cultural invasion, particularly through the mass media, Canadians have suffered identity crises; one of Canad's most imminent writers, Margaret Atwood, has described the Canadian identity as being based on the difficulties of "survival", with an attitude to see oneself as a "collective victim" (Atwood 1996: 359-362). It certainly would be a revealing experience to reflect on the comparison of two bordering national identities, the Canadian and the Mexican, with the American.

On forming the study of Anglophones cultures through the mediation of the various disciplines mentioned above, the individual and collective experiences of the students would at the same time be incarnate, holistic learning. The emotions, the power of the imagination, and deliberation constitute the Deweyan act of "thinking" (Dewey 1989a: 232; Dewey 1988b: 135; Dewey 1998: 335). Even cognitive psychologists recognize the crucial role of emotions; it is probable that it "may be in the rapid interplay of feelings...that the source of the creation of ideas, later to receive

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[2] For Mexicans, the United States has the nickname of "el coloso del norte."

their analytic flesh and bones, may be found" (Spiro 1980: 274).

Furthermore, examples from literature and other arts of the themes mentioned above can help us to explore deeply moral issues through the use of imagination. For example, the contemporary American philosopher, Martha Nussbaum, emphatically defends the use of literature throughout the other disciplines (although she in particular refers to law) to counteract a prevailing scienticism that ignores the interpretation and meaningful construction of what is human through adding an ethical perspective (Nussbaum 1997: 72-73). Literature (and we believe all arts) induce us to empathize with other human beings while intensely participating in "foreign" (that is, outside our usual) experiences. In this same sense, Rorty quotes Dewey on the moral role of aesthetics:

> ...imagination is the chief instrument of the good...art is more moral than moralities. For the latter either are, or tend to become, consecrations of the status quo.... The moral prophets of humanity have always been poets even though they spoke in free verse or by parable. (Dewey in Rorty 1989: 69)

The Particular Case of Post-colonial Cultures and Literatures

Everything that we have observed about multidisciplinarity in the study of Anglophone cultures is equally true for the study of Anglophone post-colonial cultures. We also feel there are affinities between the hybrid, post-colonial subject and those students in the "Expanding Circle", like Mexico, where English is a hegemonic language (or a "prestigious" one, depending on your point of view) (Kachru 1992a). In the EFL field, the critical pedagogy advocate, Pennycook, has constantly defended the use of post-colonial literatures as a way of answering back or "re-writing" the same language that before was employed as an instrument of domination in order to reformulate new realities that challenge the metropolis

(Pennycook 1994: 260). We ought to remember that Pennycook advocates the pedagogical possibilities for EFL of the new post-colonial literatures *in those countries that are ex-colonies* (the "Outer Circle") as a way for students to discover their own "voice," that is, "the place where the past, collective memories, experiences, subjectivities and meanings intersect" (Pennycook 1994: 296). Moreover, Kachru notes that post-colonial literatures can be utilized "as a resource for cross-cultural awareness and for understanding linguistic creativity and innovations" (Kachru 1992a: 360) given that

> [post-colonial literatures in English] open a window offering distinctly different views on non-Western cultures and their literary, cultural, and historical canons. They actually expand the canon of English. (Kachru 1992b: 9)

In order to exemplify some post-colonial authors and their variety of perspectives, let us begin with Salman Rushdie. Rushdie characterizes the fruitful possibilities of hybridization when acknowledging the condition of Indian writers in England—like him, who

> have access to a second tradition, quite apart from their own racial history. It is the culture and political history of the phenomenon of migration, displacement, life in a minority group. We can quite legitimately claim as our ancestors the Huguenots, the Irish, the Jews; the past to which we belong is an English past, the history of immigrant England. Swift, Conrad, Marx are as much our literary forebears as Tagore or Ram Mohan Roy. (Rushdie 1992: 20)

He further describes the harsh censorship (he himself was sentenced to death by Muslim fundamentalists) that his novel, *The Satanic Verses*, received for not keeping to a "pure" vision of Islam:

> Those who oppose the novel most vociferously today are of the opinion that intermingling with a different culture will inevitably weaken and ruin their own. I am of the opposite opinion. *The Satanic Verses* celebrates

> hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelization and fears the absolutism of the Pure. (Rushdie 1992: 394)

Additionally, with the Nigerian writer, Chinua Achebe, we meet another sensible voice facing the colonization of his country (and continent); he affirms the power of literature to confront post-colonial modernization:

> Literature, whether handed down by word of mouth or print, gives us a second handle on reality; enabling us to encounter in the safe, manageable dimensions of make-believe the very same threats to integrity that may assail the psyche in real life; and at the same time providing through the self-discovery which it imparts a veritable weapon for coping with these threats whether they are found within problematic and incoherent selves or in the world around us. What better preparation can a people desire as they begin their journey into the strange, revolutionary world of modernization. (Achebe 1996: 26)

Also, Achebe incessantly criticizes the fabrication of the "otherness" of Africa by Western societies, the necessity to

> set Africa up as a foil to Europe, as a place of negations at once remote and vaguely familiar, in comparison with which Europe's own state of spiritual grace will be manifest.... [The] West seems to suffer deep anxieties about the precariousness of its civilization and to have a need for constant reassurance by comparison with Africa. (Achebe in North 2000: 40)

What Achebe and many other intellectuals of both the "Outer Circle" as well as the "Expanding Circle" are looking for is the acknowledgment of the complexity of their peoples by the West (supposedly more "developed"):

> [Africa is] quite simply a continent of people—not angels, but not rudimentary souls either—just people, often highly gifted people and often strikingly successful in their enterprise with life and society. (Achebe in North 2000: 41)

As a final example, among many, we have the situation of the American

Chicanos, when a people who have been subjugated have the necessity to possess stories of resistance. According to the Chicano intellectual, Arturo Arteaga, history "is not so much a chronological representation of truth as it is an ideal narrative" (Arteaga 1999: 333). The same author explains why narrativity has such a pivotal role within the histories of peoples:

> Narratives constitute the content of relations between peoples. They are the order, sense, and fact of physical and political power. It is for this reason that a people in revolution seizes history. It is for this reason that a people resisting oppression constructs an alternate reality, constructs narratives of resistance. The fact of resistance, of two peoples in conflict, is the fact of different versions of reality in conflict. Definitions are at stake: who is master, who is citizen, who immigrant?... The stories of history and other discourses is [sic] wrestled with the consequence that the winner defines reality. (Arteaga 1999: 334)

In this way, Arteaga describes the underlying reason for the narratives of resistance that comprise Chicano literature in the United States. The possession of such stories offers a counter-hegemonic "voice" for the Chicanos, a similar role that Pennycook pointed out for the post-colonial literatures in English of the "Outer Circle."

With this brief synopsis of Anglophone post-colonial writing, we can observe those links that it could afford EFL students in order to reflect on the perception of the cultural hegemonic penetration of their country; at the same time, they could develop discernment concerning Anglophone countries, thus hopefully ending monolithic ideas about what is the cultural component in the English class. The same post-colonial approach can also serve to eliminate stereotypes about the "Inner and Outer Circles." For example, reading "narratives of resistance" can be revealing in the analysis of subaltern and counter-hegemonic groups within the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, or Australia. With critical examinations of such nature, students should learn not to equate the ruling government of a hegemonic country with the

totality of its people. Through such meaningful contents and touching the students' own life-experiences, Anglophone post-colonial writing presents genuine and profound problems and controversies which certainly would aid in the educative goal of harmonic and integral growth of our students (Dewey 1966: 159; 155). Thus, in a "paradigm shift" of placing EFL within the broader context of Anglophone studies, learners would have the opportunity to come into contact with a broad range of elements—Deweyan tools—to aid in the formation of the discerning mind of social intelligence, as they construct their own diverse, hybrid "voice" of reflexive "resistance."

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University Professor of English

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Av. San Rafael Atlixco #186, Col. Vicentina
C.P. 09340
Del. Iztapalapa, México, D.F.
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